

REMARKS

There were 18 claims in the original application numbered 1 – 18. With this response there are 17 claims numbered 1 – 11, 13 – 16, and 19 - 20. The status of the claims is as follows: claims 1, 2, 9, 10, 14, and 15 (currently amended); claims 19 and 20 (new); claims 12, 17, and 18 (cancelled); and claims 3 – 8, 11, 13, and 16 (original). Claims 1, 9, 14, and 19 – 20 are the independent claims.

Applicant has amended several claims as identified above including all of the independent claims. Applicant believes these amended claims are supported by the specification and include no new matter. Applicant believes that the claims as amended and their dependent claims are now allowable over the previously cited art by the Examiner (Notani, United States Patent Number 6,119,149). Applicant has added at least the unique aspect of the Regional Authorities and their exercise of control over the Hubs with reference to the data stored at each of the Hubs.

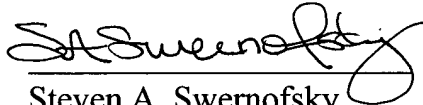
Closing

It is believed that the entire application is now in condition for allowance.
Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of this application.

If, in the opinion of the Examiner, an interview would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the telephone number shown below.

Respectfully submitted,

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